

**THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE
THE HISTORIC CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH**

Built upon **FAITH**

Saved through **FAITH**



Corpus Christi Church
199 Clark Street
Buffalo, NY 14212
716.896.1050
www.buffalo.cc

Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi Church stands not only as a place of worship, but also as a prayer in stone, plaster, wood and glass, a prayer offered by all who sacrificed so that it could be built . . . a prayer offered by those whose hands shaped it and a prayer by those who have since come to cherish and worship in this magnificent House of God.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of our beloved church, major structural repairs and interior restoration are urgently needed to preserve Corpus Christi for generations to come. To honor the traditions of our ancestors, and as a catalyst for renewal in this historic neighborhood, our Parish is dedicated to carrying out these critical repairs. To reach our goal, we are asking for the help of all whose lives have been touched by this symbol of Polish heritage and jeweled centerpiece of faith on Buffalo's East Side.



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The Story of Our Church

Corpus Christi was established in 1898 by Fr. Hyacinth Fudzinski, a Franciscan Conventual friar, to accommodate a rapidly growing Polish immigrant community in one of the most densely populated neighborhoods of Buffalo.

The cornerstone of the present Romanesque Revival church was laid in 1907. Built of Onondaga limestone faced with red Medina sandstone, Corpus Christi was designed by noted Buffalo architects Schmill and Gould. Eventually the parish grew into a six building complex. This church, like churches in all of Buffalo's immigrant neighborhoods, became the actual and the symbolic focal point for community life. An elementary school, run by the Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph, instructed parish children until the 1980s. In its most prosperous years, Corpus Christi served not only the spiritual, but also the educational, social and recreational needs of 2,000 families in its congregation.

The awe-inspiring church interior, featuring some of the finest ecclesiastical art in the city, has 11,000 light bulbs illuminating the sanctuary. In the sanctuary apse is a rendering of Raphael Santi's (1483-1520) famous *Disputa*. It depicts the Church's illustrious theologians and mystics trying to plumb the mysteries of the Eucharist. The exquisite stained glass windows were made by Franz Mayer Works of Munich, Germany.

"The Father Justin's Rosary Hour" radio program was originally broadcast from the sanctuary of Corpus Christi Church starting in 1931. It remains the oldest continuing religious radio program in the Polish language worldwide.

Corpus Christi is a distinctive "skyscraper" on Buffalo's East Side. During construction, the gold crosses atop the copper domes of its twin towers were filled with hundreds of letters written by the Parish's children. These spires rise majestically above the landmarks of the art deco Central Terminal and storied Broadway Market. The church bells have recently been repaired, ringing out as a call to faith and hope in a neighborhood that is struggling for a second chance.



Saved through FAITH

Corpus Christi's Rebirth

For nearly a century, Corpus Christi Church has been cared for with a generosity that reflects the spirit of the Polish immigrants who devoted this beautiful "prayer" to God. Yet in recent decades, this historic church faced the dire threat of a dwindling congregation and diminishing financial resources, while experiencing soaring operational and maintenance costs for its aging buildings. In the spring of 2003, the Conventual Franciscan Fathers announced an end to their 105 years of service and the intention of closing Corpus Christi Church. This seemingly inevitable fate is shared by so many urban churches across America - a threat so widespread and so serious that in 2003 the National Trust for Historic Preservation placed urban houses of worship on the list of America's most endangered historic places.

Faced with the loss of not only their magnificent church, but also the symbolic connection to their ancestors' hopes and dreams, the congregation was moved to action. The Friends of Corpus Christi was created, composed of parishioners and interested lay people devoted to saving the church from closing. Working with Bishop Henry Mansell of the Diocese of Buffalo and Monsignor Matthew Kopacz, the Order of St. Paul the Hermit (commonly known as the Pauline Priests and Brothers) agreed to assume pastoral and administrative responsibility for Corpus Christi Church in January 2004.

The Pauline Order, founded in Hungary in 1215, was brought to Poland in the 14th century to cherish and safeguard the Miraculous Painting of Our Lady placed at Jasna Góra in Czestochowa. The first Pauline monastery in the United States was founded in 1955 in Doylestown, PA and was dedicated as the national shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa.

The Pauline Priests and Brothers, together with the Corpus Christi congregation, stepped out in faith to save this extraordinary church from closing. We now ask you to join us in securing the long-term future of this historic community treasure by contributing to our restoration campaign.



Our Goal

Once the immediate threat of closing Corpus Christi was averted, work began in earnest to rebuild the parish. Urgently needed repairs were identified in a Facilities Assessment Report under the leadership of architect Ted Fyda. A team comprised of architects, a structural engineer, a mechanical engineer, a masonry expert and a photo layout expert undertook an extensive assessment of Corpus Christi Church and the four ancillary buildings that comprise the parish complex. The time and expertise for this critical first step was offered as a generous gift, without any cost to the parish.

The objectives of the report were to determine the physical quality and condition of all five structures and identify the most vital projects to preserve these buildings for future generations. Based on the Assessment Report, we have set a goal of raising \$1,000,000 dollars over five years (2005-2010) to carry out the repairs identified as urgent for the church's preservation.

Although we look to the generosity of Corpus Christi parishioners, we also need the support of many others who value this irreplaceable treasure in order to reach our goal. Community organizations, graduates of Corpus Christi school, descendants of parishioners, foundations and businesses, and all who are friends of the Parish are invited to support the campaign.

We have set suggested levels for contributions over the campaign's five years. Gifts made at these levels will be recognized in a permanent, prominent way in the church when the campaign is completed.

Gifts in other amounts are also welcome. We know that people have different abilities to give, and so we simply ask that each person give from the heart.

All gifts to the Church Preservation Fund will be restricted for the restoration project.

All gifts to the campaign are tax deductible.



Growing in FAITH

Some Early Results

Corpus Christi Church is a significant resource in our community: To the passers-by, it is an imposing monument in the urban landscape . . . To those who enter, it is a place of reverential beauty . . . To Buffalo's East Side, it is a stabilizing influence . . . To preservationists, it is a priceless treasure of art and architectural splendor . . . To city leaders, it is a community resource, a catalyst for urban renewal and, together with the art deco Central Terminal and renowned Broadway Market, an integral part of Buffalo's hopes for a challenged neighborhood . . . To parishioners, it is a spiritual home . . . To historians, it chronicles the story of Polish immigration history . . . To all Western New Yorkers, it is one of a number of cherished landmarks that defines our community's unique character and sense of place . . . To all people, it offers comfort, hope and inspiration.

Our Parish has many ministries and many responsibilities. **Since 2004, our faith community has grown by 26% and now numbers 340 families.** We offer services in both English and Polish. We provide religious education to young people, education in the faith for the non-baptized, and assistance to both local charities and causes in Poland as well as other outreach programs.

Through the generous gifts of our parishioners and friends and with the help of numerous volunteers we have recently:

- Dedicated shrines to Our Lady of Czestochowa and Divine Mercy
- Re-opened the bell tower and repaired the church bells for manual operation
- Illuminated the church towers
- Added new landscaping
- Renovated the 70 seat convent chapel
- Replaced the 73 year-old furnace in the monastery
- Made emergency roof repairs

Our Parish is free and clear of debt. We are in the process of creating an endowment to help provide future financial security. Although our revenues are meeting current operating costs, the Parish earnings are insufficient to undertake urgent restoration projects. For this reason, we must rely on the support of parishioners and friends to make the campaign to revitalize Corpus Christi Church a success.

The Program of Repair: Major Restoration Projects

Campaign Goal: \$1,000,000

Exterior Masonry

Severely deteriorated mortar and stones on facade, including the tower, are causing water damage inside the church.



Towers

Water leaks into both towers. The copperwork and the wooden decking of the cupolas need to be inspected, repaired or rebuilt. Interior steelwork framing for the cupolas display significant rust and must be inspected and repaired. Stonework must be inspected and repaired.





Main Roof

Slates that are deteriorated or missing must be replaced. Loose slates must be repaired. Copper flashing which prevents the passage of water into the church must be repaired or replaced.

Electrical System

The wiring systems need to be upgraded, securing the unique lighting pattern contained in the arches both in the sanctuary and the church proper. The exterior lightning protection system must be repaired.

Floor

Restore the original terrazzo floor to its original luster and beauty.



Interior Apse

The mural over the sanctuary, a copy of Raphael Santi's famous *Disputa* shows evidence of water damage and tearing of the canvas. The apse must be inspected from above and below to determine the cause. Repairs and restoration work need to be done. There is similar damage in several other areas of the church.

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PLEDGE CARD

Yes! I want to contribute toward the Corpus Christi Preservation Fund.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone (w/ area code) _____

Email: _____

Please indicate how you would like to contribute:
Check enclosed, payable to Corpus Christi Preservation Fund.

Installments of \$ _____ to be paid quarterly over the five years of the campaign (2005-2010).

Please indicate how you would like your gift acknowledged.

Name _____

In memory of _____

Anonymous

Please check the level of your total gift.

Brick and Mortar Level: \$500
\$100 a year – equivalent to less than \$2 set aside per week

Cornerstone Level: \$1,000
\$200 a year – equivalent to less than \$4 set aside per week.

Pillar Level: \$2,500
\$500 a year – equivalent to less than \$10 set aside per week.

Bell Tower Level: \$5,000
\$1,000 a year – equivalent to less than \$20 set aside per week.

Steeple Level: \$10,000
\$2,000 a year – equivalent to less than \$40 set aside per week.

Cupola Level: Above \$10,000

Please contact me regarding my will.

Thank you for your generosity!

Church Restoration Committee



Jim Serafin
Chairman, Friends of Corpus Christi

Stanislaw Baltaziuk
Henry Bernat
Carol Bronnenkant
Christine Cooley
Lucy Cullens
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Henry Swiatek
Zbigniew Wilkosz

Advisors:
Michael Arnold
Martin Ederer, PhD.
Eli Mundy
Kathleen Wiater

Ex officio:
Father Anzelm Chalupka, Pastor

If you would like more details about the church repairs or the capital campaign, or if you are interested in underwriting the cost of specific church projects, please call Jim Serafin, Chairman at 716.896.6464, or any member of the Church Restoration Committee will be happy to provide you with more information.

Contact us: **Corpus Christi Church**
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Open for prayer and visitation:
Monday - Friday 6:30 AM - 3:30 PM
Saturday 7:30 AM - 6 PM
Sunday 7:30 AM - 12:30 PM



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